



Men Against Violence Against Women

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INTRODUCTION.

NATURAL GROWTH ARCHITECTURE (NGA) —A REALITY AND OUR FUTURE.

Architecture is defined as the science, art or profession of designing and constructing buildings or other structures.

“Architecture through the ages, has evolved and adapted to meet the changing needs of Nations in their religion, politics and of events which reflects the rising cost of land and advancing technology with its designs of multi-storey buildings, of reinforced concrete, glass and steel.” The Secretary, Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Architects, 1990.

“Architecture is undoubtedly one of the most enjoyable professions. It offers a wealth of interest in a variety of fields, which few other professions can match and provides an emotional satisfaction, which only the other arts can stimulate. It exacts a high price for this enjoyment however, and in order to derive the fullest pleasure from it, the architect must devote himself completely to its- study and practice. The more proficient he can become and the greater the mastery he can acquire, the more complete will be his enjoyment. At the same time he has a very real responsibility towards his fellow men, for the buildings and environments which he creates may well have a profound effect on their lives and those of their children.” Arthur Willis and W B George “The Architect In Practice” Fifth Edition 1974 page 1.

The following are the subjects on which lectures are given and examinations set, as part of any comprehensive course in architecture: -

1. Construction and Design.
2. Nature of Materials.
3. Theory of Structures.
4. Law.
5. Services.

The architect's duties briefly consist of: -

1. The design of the building.
2. The preparation of working drawings and contract documents.
3. The arranging of the contract.
4. The supervision of the work whilst in progress.
5. The certifying of interim payments and the examination of final accounts (including their checking if no quantity surveyor is appointed).

In my view, architecture as had been practiced to date, has failed us miserably, both in the training and education of future architects and in the service to humankind, in spite of the advice and guidelines laid down by our most committed architects.

This failure has been recorded dramatically in developing countries and can be seen in the following ways: -

1. Developments that require continuous security and isolated from its surrounding neighbours.
2. Mass housing solutions which creates serious social problems, some like crime, poverty, and domestic violence increasing at alarming rates.
3. Housing developments very underutilized by its residents.
4. The image of the collar and tie, nose in the air professional, given by most architects and in the manner with which they showcase their work to the public, saturated with condescension for the less fortunate so trained.
5. The focus in training programmes is to become an architect and service clients, as opposed to making a positive contribution to the art and practice of architecture as a service to humankind.
6. In every country where architects practice, there is an enormous difference between supply and demand, which is continuously increasing, since a new birth occurs every nine months and a new architect completes training every seven years.
7. At my last count, in Trinidad and Tobago, there were 65 practicing registered architects to service a population of 1.3 million people. This means that 1 architect has a potential market of 18,000 persons. Therefore, if s/he obtains one client per year, s/he has to live for 18,000 years to satisfy this market share, bearing in mind that the population is growing in a 7:1 ratio to the supply of architects and repeat business follows a quality service.
In one city in India, there were 500 architects for a population of 4 million persons, i.e. 1 architect with a market share of 8,000 persons.
In Martinique and Guadeloupe there were 220 architects for a population of 700,000 persons, i.e. 1 architect with an available market share of 1,181 persons.
8. The majority of developments, both in the residential and commercial domains, confront with nature's guidelines for developing, which demands the following -
 - Only what is necessary to be removed be removed.
 - Include shelter agriculture and green building techniques.
 - Develop high-rise structures in the incline plane or stepped forms.
 - Embrace the natural and unplanned surrounding environment, in order to enhance the living quality of the whole community.
9. Architects, in spite of the devastating negative effects being felt by Nations, give sociological and psychosocial concerns, existing and developing in settlements slight attention. Issues like Crime, Poverty, Domestic Violence and Dysfunctional Families.

Traditional architectural practice has exhibited as outlined above three things: -

1. A serious Personnel problem.
2. A bad Attitude towards Nature and
3. Insensitivity to the sociological and psychosocial aspects of space use.

I repeat here that traditional architecture, as had been practiced to date has failed us miserably

Consequently, we need a new direction for this profession of my choice and soul. It has slipped off the path for genuine development. Many are being overwhelmed by the glory of accreditation and the love for beautiful drawings and buildings, a small part of the whole concept that is “Service To Humanity”, in this discipline that is architecture, shaping space to benefit humankind.

This direction is titled “**Natural Growth Architecture,**” architecture for the people, by the people, with the people. A lifestyle you could say, which places the spiritual before the personal. A continuous living, learning, service to humanity, shaping space to achieve maximum efficiency, minimum cost, with development in harmony with nature and the built environment, both formal and informal. A definition for this new architecture is given immediately below: -

Natural Growth Architecture is the science, art or activity directed towards solving humankind's space problems, utilizing its human, capital and/or natural resources in a manner sensitive and adaptive to evolving design, construction and sociological concerns.

The following 8 points briefly describe what is the study/practice of Natural Growth Architecture: -

1. A study of architecture alongside providing a service, which will never be completed, accepting the philosophy that growth is continuous and God is the final Judge of competence, i.e. certification will never be achieved.
2. This study/practice is fuelled by: -
 - ***Formally trained concepts.***
 - ***Experiential and self directed learning.***
 - ***Natural growth concepts.***
3. This study/practice is based on design, construction, social and nature 's guidelines utilizing: -
 - ***Formal teaching methods.***
 - ***Research in the area of architecture studied as a live-in student.***
 - ***Analysis of peripheral or supporting disciplines.***
4. It suggests that the force within (the love) to be involved with architecture and the space solution it encompasses, is too dynamic to wait on the classroom model of learning and places little emphasis on the regimentation and prestige of accreditation associated with traditional training for architects.
5. The titles in this study/practice are of two types: -
 - ***A person following the 14 Principles in Natural Growth Architecture for 1 to 8 years is a Friend of Architecture.*** (Principles are listed on next page No 4)
 - ***A person following the 14 Principles in NGA for 8 years to the end of their natural life is a Natural Growth Architect.*** (Principles are listed on next page No 4)
6. The level of commitment required to stay a Friend of Architecture and eventually a Natural Growth Architect, will soon weed out those without that special love (inward force) necessary to fine tune skills essential for providing the best “space solutions” in humankind's quest for positive development.
7. Because of the limited number of architects available to citizens worldwide, they should be made use of at every level of their training, according to the levels of expertise acquired as they progress.
8. Developing countries cannot afford the luxury of sending their best potential architects abroad to study. This means 7 years without this citizens/student input into National Development, which will allow growth for both the country and the individual. Further, the acclimatization to a foreign climate will be a setback to providing service in the home country, if and when they return.

The following 14 Principles of Natural Growth Architecture further explain the 8 points abovementioned. These Principles start with a Pledge emphasizing the most important Principle in the study and practice of Natural Growth Architecture: -

1. I pledge to place service to humankind above all other demands on architecture.
2. Love for architecture as a service (the spiritual) before love for beautifully shaped spaces and the acquisition of material wealth (the personal) thereby making a genuine and positive contribution to the development of the art and practice of architecture.
3. Development and practice links service with training in a continuous spiral to the end allowing horizontal dialogue throughout the path as opposed to vertical dialogue. *The numbers dictate.*
4. Shelter Agriculture is essential to settlement development i.e. a percentage of all residential building lots must be allocated for agricultural purposes.
5. Green Architecture principle in high-rise residential and commercial construction directing that a percentage at every floor level be utilized for plant or agricultural use.
6. High-rise development to be non-confrontational to nature. Inclined or stepped not vertical.
7. Location for service/training relevant to focus of specialization choice e.g. housing, schools.
8. Legal/activist vehicle formulated in order to provide immediate and long-term dissemination of information relevant to the specialization, further developing the service/practice, (the developmental nature of NGA) e.g. registered NGO or CBO.
9. Recognizing and vigorously promoting a Human Resource Management Policy which identifies the Full Cycle Of Human Development paying close attention to the Ripple Effect Theory (RET) and the Ripple Effect Model (REM) for research and development.
10. All efforts towards the solving of space problems will appreciate and include the usable existing natural growth experiences emanating from both planned and unplanned developments.
11. Gender issues will be given its just due e.g. parenting practices, domestic violence, etc.
12. The elements in this study/practice mandate close attention to the following factors: -

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| i. Socio-design. | ii. Socio-construction. | iii. Socio-legal. |
| iv. Socio-education. | v. Socio-transportation. | vi. Socio-management. |
| vii. Socio-dialogue. | viii. Socio-environment. | ix. Socio-psychological. |
| x. Socio-economic. | | |
13. Friends of Architecture and Natural Growth Architects must be prepared to receive basic and advanced training respectively in the following subject areas, whilst giving service in accordance to their level of competency: -

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, Construction and Theory of Structures. • Law (both civil and criminal) • Social Psychology. • Environmental Psychology. • Pedagogy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Literacy. • Non-Governmental Activity • Home Management. • Services. • Nature of Materials |
|---|---|
14. Candidates for the study/practice of Natural Growth Architecture will have one or two of the following characteristics: -
 - A person with that inward force (love/desire) to solve space problems, too strong to sit out the classroom-training model.
 - A person with that inward force (love/desire) to solve space problems but without the financial capital to acquire the formal training in a classroom.
 - A person with that inward force (love/desire) to solve space problems but unhappy with the aloft image and detrimental aspects of architectural practice to date.

SignedDONALD BERMENT Secretary MAVAW.

Yours In Nation Building

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P.O.R.O.